

## Message Text

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E. O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: SHUM ML  
SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS: MALI ACTION PLAN

REF: STATE 142618

1. FOLLOWING IS POST'S REVISION OF DRAFT HUMAN RIGHTS  
ACTION PLAN FOR MALI TRANSMITTED REFTEL.

2. A. CONDITION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN MALI.

(1) RESPECT FOR THE INTEGRITY OF THE PERSON.

WHILE MALIAN LAW AND ITS DEPENDENT LEGAL AND JUDICIAL SYSTEM  
GUARANTEES THE INTEGRITY OF THE PERSON, THE MALIAN STILL  
FINDS THAT HIS PERSONAL RIGHTS ARE BEST PROTECTED IN THE  
TRADITIONAL SOCIETAL STRUCTURE, IN WHICH FAMILY AND VIL-  
LAGE RELATIONSHIPS ESTABLISH SECURITY OF THE PERSON IN A  
SURPRISINGLY EFFECTIVE MANNER. THERE ARE NO REPORTS OF  
TORTURE OR OF CRUEL, INHUMAN, OR DEGRADING PUNISHMENT IN  
MALI. ALTHOUGH ARBITRARY ARREST AND IMPRISONMENT  
ARE UNCOMMON, THEY OCCUR ON OCCASION IN CONNECTION  
WITH "POLITICAL OFFENSES." PROLONGED DETENTION  
WITHOUT CHARGES IS SIMILARLY UNCOMMON, WITH THE ONLY  
CONFIRMED RECENT CASE THAT OF SIX TUAREG SECESSIONISTS  
IMPRISONED FROM 1963 UNTIL THEIR TRIALS IN 1977.

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HOUSE-TO-HOUSE SEARCHES OCCUR ON A VERY INFREQUENT  
BASIS, USUALLY AS THE RESULT OF SOME SPECIFIC POLI-  
TICAL INCIDENT, SUCH AS DURING THE RECENT STUDENT  
STRIKES. WHILE VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AS CITED  
ABOVE DO OCCUR, THEY ARE EXCEPTIONAL AND NOT APPLIED  
IN A PervasivE, SYSTEMATIC MANNER.

(2) RESPECT FOR CIVIL AND POLITICAL LIBERTIES.

MALI IS PRESENTLY RULED BY A MILITARY COMMITTEE, AND ORGANIZED POLITICAL ACTIVITY IS PROHIBITED. WHILE MALIANS, IN PRIVATE, FREELY CRITICIZE THEIR GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY, THE GOVERNMENT RETAINS CONTROL OVER ALL PUBLIC EXPRESSION OF VIEWS, AND WOULD NOT BRIEFLY ANY PUBLIC ATTACK ON ITS AUTHORITY. FIFTEEN PERSONS WERE ARRESTED FOR DISTRIBUTING A PAMPHLET OPPOSING THE JUNE 2, 1974, CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM, AND IN RECENT MONTHS THE GOVERNMENT USED FORCE TO CONTROL A SERIES OF STREET DEMONSTRATIONS WHICH ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS HAD RESULTED IN VANDALISM AND DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY. MALIANS ARE FREE TO ASSEMBLE FOR RELIGIOUS, SOCIAL, AND PROFESSIONAL PURPOSES, ALTHOUGH THE LABOR UNIONS, WOMEN'S AND OTHER GROUPS FOLLOW THE GOVERNMENT LINE ON ALL POLITICAL QUESTIONS. MISSIONARIES REPORT MORE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM THAN AT ANY OTHER TIME IN MALIAN HISTORY. THE NEW MALIAN CONSTITUTION, WHICH WILL COME INTO FULL FORCE IN 1979, FORESEES THE ELECTION BY UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE OF A PRESIDENT AND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, AND THE NASCENT POLITICAL PARTY, THE DEMOCRATIC UNION OF THE MALIAN PEOPLE, WILL AT LAST THEORETICALLY SPRING FROM A POPULAR BASE. THE CONSTITUTION GUARANTEES VARIOUS FREEDOMS AND RIGHTS AS WELL AS EQUALITY UNDER THE LAW FOR ALL EXCEPT ADHERENTS OF THE PRE-1968 REGIME, BUT IT IS DIFFICULT

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TO JUDGE HOW EFFECTIVELY THE CONSTITUTIONAL SAFEGUARDS WILL BE APPLIED. THE DELIBERATE PACE OF PROGRESS TOWARD RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE IS GENERALLY TAKEN AS INDICATIVE OF CONSIDERABLE CONFLICT WITHIN THE MILITARY COMMITTEE OVER THE EXTENT OF REFORM DESIRABLE.

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FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT WITHIN MALI IS GENERALLY UNRESTRICTED, ALTHOUGH INTER-CITY TRAVELERS ARE SUBJECT TO FREQUENT POLICE CHECKS, WHICH ARE ALLOWED BY THE LAW. THE PRESENT MILITARY GOVERNMENT WON ITS POPULARITY IN PART BY REMOVING MOST BARRIERS TO TRAVEL COMMON UNDER THE PREVIOUS KEITA REGIME. THERE ARE NO BARRIERS TO EMIGRATION.

(3) RECENT TRENDS IN GOVERNMENTAL POLICIES RELATING TO THE FULFILLMENT OF BASIC NEEDS FOR FOOD, SHELTER, HEALTH CARE AND EDUCATION.

A. MALI'S PRESENT GOVERNMENTAL POLICIES ARE FOCUSED ON RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF THE POOR--MALI RANKS AMONG THE THREE OR FOUR POOREST NATIONS OF THE WORLD ACCORDING TO UN ESTIMATES. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS ARE AIMED AT IMPROVING THE LIVELIHOOD OF THE COUNTRY'S OVERWHELMINGLY RURAL AGRICULTURAL AND NOMADIC POPULATION.

B. CORRUPTION, WHILE NOT YET REACHING THE SPECTACULAR SCALE OF SOME THIRD-WORLD NATIONS, IS A GROWING PROBLEM. ITS FIRST SIGNIFICANT APPEARANCE CAN BE TRACED TO THE TIME OF THE DROUGHT, WHEN DIVERSION OF COMMODITIES AND MISAPPROPRIATION OF FUNDS WERE

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NOTED BY ALMOST ALL DONORS. IN SPITE OF ALMOST CONSTANT WARNINGS BY PRESIDENT TRAORE AGAINST DISHONEST PRACTICES, THE OCCASIONAL TRIALS, AND THE REMOVAL OF EGREGIOUSLY CORRUPT OFFICIALS, THE GOVERNMENT EXHIBITS A CONTINUED RELUCTANCE TO CLEAN ITS OWN HOUSE. CORRUPTION CANNOT YET BE CONSIDERED A SERIOUS DRAIN ON THE COUNTRY'S DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES. IT DOES, NONETHELESS, HAVE A BRAKING EFFECT, AND FOR THE MOMENT IT SEEMS TO BE SPREADING RATHER THAN DIMINISHING.

(4) LEVEL OF THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FOREGOING HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD.  
THE MALIAN GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE TOWARD HUMAN RIGHTS AS DEFINED BY THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN

RIGHTS IS AMBIVALENT. ON THE ONE HAND THE CONSTITUTION CONFIRMS THESE RIGHTS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE LAW GIVES THE GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY TO OVERRIDE THESE RIGHTS IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST. THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT HAS RATHER BROADLY EXERCISED ITS PREROGATIVES. SECURITY OF THE STATE HAS ON OCCASION BEEN USED TO JUSTIFY VIOLATIONS OF POLITICAL RIGHTS.

MALI APPEARS TO BE GENUINELY PREPARED TO MOVE TOWARD GREATER RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, BUT ONLY SLOWLY AND IN ACCORD WITH THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT'S PACE. NATIONAL RECONCILIATION IS ONE OF THE FIRM TENETS OF THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAM, AND SOME PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE.

(5) WILLINGNESS AND PAST RECORD OF THE GOVERNMENT REGARDING INDEPENDENT, OUTSIDE INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGED HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS.

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THERE HAVE BEEN NO INDEPENDENT, OUTSIDE INVESTIGATIONS OF ALLEGED HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN MALI. AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL HAS MADE NO RECENT PUBLIC STATEMENTS REGARDING HUMAN RIGHTS IN MALI, BUT SINCE 1968 AI HAS URGED THE RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS AND IN 1974 ORGANIZED A CAMPAIGN TO PUBLICIZE THE PRISONERS' PLIGHT.

IN 1975, PROCLAIMED THE "YEAR OF RECONCILIATION" BY PRESIDENT TRAORE, MANY--BUT NOT ALL--POLITICAL PRISONERS WERE RELEASED.

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3. B. ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

(1) LEGITIMATE OBJECTIVES OVER THE NEXT THREE, SIX, TWELVE MONTHS IN RELATION TO IMPROVING CONDITIONS IN MALI, WITH RESEPECT TO CATEGORIES A(1), (2) AND (3) ABOVE. IN TERMS OF (A) IMPORTANCE, (B) FEASIBILITY, (C) US LEVERAGE, (D) LIKELY INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT AND (E) OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDED.

OUR OBJECTIVES OVER THE NEAR AND MID-TERM SHOULD BE TO: 1) ENCOURAGE MALI'S PRESENT TREND TOWARD NATIONAL RECONCILIATION BY ACTION SUCH AS FREEING ALL REMAINING POLITICAL PRISONERS ESTIMATED TO TOTALAL EIGHT; 2) CONTINUE TO ASSIST IN PROMOTING MALI'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN SUCH A MANNER THAT THE LIVELIHOOD OF THE POOREST ELEMENTS OF THE POPULATIONS WILL BE IMRPOVED; AND 3) ENCOURAGE ENTRY INTO FULL FORCE OF THE 1974 CONSTITUTION'S GUARANTEES ON THE PRESCRIBED JUNE 1979 DATE NOW ESTABLISHED FOR RETURN TO CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT; AND 4) BY THE MOST DISCREET AND INDIRECT WAYS, ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT OF THE POLITICAL PARTY NOW BEING FORMED.

THESE ARE IMPORTANT STEPS WHICH SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE MALI'S HUMAN RIGHTS PERFORMANCE. OUR CONFIDENTIAL

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LEVERAGE, HOWEVER, IS MODEST--PRIMARILY OUR BILATERAL AND SAHEL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. MALI IS NOT A HARSH REGIME, IN SPITE OF ITS HUMAN RIGHT FAILINGS, AND DOES HAVE A LEGITIMATE FEAR OF SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITY AGAINST THE STATE. INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE USE OF OUR SOLE ELVERAGE--REDUCING OR ELIMINATING OUR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE--WOULD BE NON-EXISTENT.

QUIET DIPLOMACY WOULD BE OUR BEST COURSE OF ACTION. WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO STRESS FIRMLY AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS THE US GOVERNMENT INTEREST IN HUMAN RIGHTS AND OUR BELIEF THAT MALI SHOULD TAKE MEASURES TO IMRPOVE ITS PERFORMANCE AND RECORD.

MALI IS ELIGIBLE FOR FMS PROGRAMS, BUT THERE IS NO BILATERAL PROGRAM AT PRESENT. THE MALIANS ARE INTERESTED IN THE RESUMPTION OF ENGLISH-LANGUAGE

TRAINING, FOR MILITARY PERSONNEL, AND HUMAN RIGHTS  
CONDITIONS SHOULD BE A FACTOR IN WEIGHING ANY SUCH REQUEST.

ACTION TO PRESSURE MALI THROUGH ECONOMIC  
RESTRICTIONS, WHETHER BILATERAL AID OR RELATED TO IFI  
LOANS OR EXIM BANK CREDITS, WOULD BRING MORE HARM TO  
MALI'S POOR--THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THE POPU-  
LATION--THAN ANY HUMAN RIGHTS IMPROVEMENT THAT COULD  
BE EXPECTED MIGHT IMPROVE THEIR LOT.

(2) PRINCIPAL REACTIONS IN MALI TO THE NEW US  
HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAM AND EMBASSY ACTIONS AND PROPOSED  
ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF THESE POLICIES:

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WHILE MALIANS HAVE SHOWN A KEEN INTEREST IN THE  
NEW US FOREIGN POLICY EMPHASIS ON HUMAN RIGHTS,  
THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE CAMPAIGN IS GENERALLY LIMITED  
TO AREAS WHERE SUPPORT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IS CONGRUENT  
WITH ALREADY HELD MALIAN POSITIONS. THUS, MALIANS  
ARE ENTHUSIASTIC WHENEVER THE UNITED STATES CONDEMNDS  
THE SUPPRESSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS BY SOUTHERN AFRICAN  
WHITE REGIMES. STATEMENTS REGARDING OTHER COUNTRIES  
WITH WHICH MALI HAS CLOSE RELATIONS OR COUNTRIES  
WHICH ARE NOT HELD IN GENERAL DISFAVOR BY THE THIRD  
WORLD RADICAL BLOC ARE DOWNPLAYED. CERTAINLY, NO  
INTERNAL APPLICABILITY OF SUCH STATEMENTS IS ACKNOW-  
LEDGED. THE MAIN AREA OF ACTIVITY IN WHICH THE  
EMBASSY CAN WORK TO INCREASE MALIAN SENSITIVITY TO  
HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES IS THROUGH QUIET DIPLOMACY. A  
CONSISTENT REFERENCE TO THE NEED TO RESPECT HUMAN  
RIGHTS WILL SERVE TO MAKE THE MALIANS AWARE OF THE  
IMPORTANCE THE UNITED STATES ATTACHES TO THE ISSUE.

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(3) EVALUATE REACTIONS IN 2 ABOVE IN TERMS OF THE  
IMPLICATIONS FOR POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE CHANGES IN  
THE HUMAN RIGHTS CONDITIONS:

AS THE SITUATION STANDS, THE US EMPHASIS ON  
HUMAN RIGHTS WILL HAVE LITTLE INFLUENCE ON HUMAN  
RIGHTS CONDITIONS IN MALI SINCE THE MALIANS DO NOT  
CONCEDE ANY RELEVANCE IN THEIR OWN CASE. THE  
MALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS SET ITS DELIBERATE TIMETABLE  
FOR OPENING OF THE POLITICAL PROCESS AND HAS  
EXHIBITED A DETERMINATION TO HOLD BY IT. CONSISTENT  
EMBASSY AFFIRMATION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ISSUE  
CAN, HOWEVER, SERVE TO ENSURE THAT THE PROJECTED  
CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT WILL BE SENSITIVE TO HUMAN RIGHTS.

(4) (A) WHERE A HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD JUSTIFIES US  
ACTIONS, EVALUATE THE IMPACT OF THOSE ACTIONS ON OTHER  
US INTERESTS IN THE COUNTRY.

US INTERESTS IN MALI ARE MINIMAL, AND ESSEN-  
TIALY HUMANITARIAN. WE HAVE NO SECURITY RELATION-  
SHIP, AND LITTLE ECONOMIC OR COMMERCIAL EXCHANGE.

MALI HAS INDICATED ITS INTEREST IN PROVING  
RELATIONS WITH THE US IN RECENT MONTHS, AND US  
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GOVERNMENT ACTION TO FORCE ACCEPTANCE OF HUMAN  
RIGHTS POLITICS--IF RESISTED BY MALI--WOULD LESSEN  
OUR ALREADY LIMITED ABILITY TO DRAW ON MALI'S  
SUPPORT FOR US INTERESTS IN THE REGION. WE WOULD  
HAVE AN ANGRY, VOCAL OPPONENT.

MALI IS A COUNTRY UNDERGOING GREAT CHANGE, BOTH  
POLITICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY. THE BASIC THRUST IS  
TO BRING ABOUT A BETTER LIFE FOR THE PEOPLE AND TO  
PREVENT THE RECURRENCE OF THE 1968-73 SAHEL DROUGHT  
RAVAGES. THE PROMISE OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT BY  
JUNE 1979 IS ENCOURAGING. DISCOURAGING IS THE LACK  
OF INDEPENDENT NON-GOVERNMENTAL SOURCES OF POLITICAL  
INFLUENCE IN MALI, AND A NOT YET FULLY OPERATIVE

CONSTITUTION.

MALI, AS A YOUNG COUNTRY, IS SENSITIVE TO  
OVERT OUTSIDE PRESSURE AND WOULD PERCEIVE PUBLIC  
DECLARATIONS ON ITS HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION AS  
MEDDLING IN ITS INTERNAL AFFAIRS.

(B) WHERE THE HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD IS GOOD, INDICATE THE LIKELIHOOD OF MALI'S SUPPORT FOR US  
EFFORTS TO PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS THROUGH GOVERNMENTAL  
AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS.

NOT APPLICABLE.

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